

348

VIRGINIA's Danger and Remedy.

T W O

DISCOURSES,

Occasioned by

The severe Drought in sundry Parts of
the Country ; and the Defeat of Ge-
neral BRADDOCK.

By *SAMUEL DAVIES, A.M.*

*Dii multa neglecti dederunt
Hesperiae [Virginiae] mala luctuosae.
Fœcunda Culpæ Sæcula, —
Hoc Fonte derivata Glades
In Patriam Populumq; Fluxit.*

Hor. Car. l. iii. Od. vi.

*Ποταμός δ' ἐκ δειπνῶς λυγρὰς αἰεὶ ἀπολαύει
Ἕσπερος, αὐτὸς δὲ ἐκείνη τὴν χεῖρα κινεῖται,
Οὐρανὸν τε γῆν τε ΔΙΟΣ Δ' Ἑρμῆς ἰετο βόταν.*

Hom. Iliad. I.

The SECOND EDITION, recommended
by the Reverend Messrs. *John Hamilton* and
John Gillies, ministers in *Glasgow*.

G L A S G O W :

Printed by J. BRYCE and D. PATERSON,
and sold at their Printing House, New-street.

M D C C L V I.

GLASGOW, Oct. 29. 1756.

BEing applied to by some here who are desirous to reprint the following sermons, provided a recommendation be prefixed by any of the ministers of this city; we cannot but heartily approve of the design, not only because the discourses are so good in themselves, and are *A word spoken in due season* to a people with whom the inhabitants of this place have many connexions; but because they contain several passages which, with a little variation, are applicable to ourselves at home; and afford matter of serious reflexion, and earnest prayer, to all who are concerned for the interests of their country, and of the kingdom of the Redeemer. May God accompany them with his Blessing,

JOHN HAMILTON.

JOHN GILLIES.





T H E
P R E F A C E.

THE following discourses are a hurried attempt to save a sinking land. The author was on a long journey, when he received the confirmation of the melancholy news from the Ohio; and he had but two days to prepare for the pulpit, after his return. And as it was judged proper by many immediately to publish the sermons, he had no time to revise and transcribe them for the press: For the country now being in a very uncertain and fluctuating state, a discourse adapted to its present situation, may be improper a few months, or even a few weeks hence. To spend time about embellishment, at such a juncture, would be egregious trifling.

The account of the drought, I know to be true; and thousands will be sensible that it is not aggravated. The account of the fatal action at the Ohio, is founded upon the best intelligences I could get; and if there be a few circumstantial mistakes, the substance is undoubtedly true.

As many of our countrymen are stupidly insensible of their danger, and cannot exert themselves for their own defence, until they are alarmed; and as but few seem disposed to view the present posture of affairs in a religious light; the author had impatiently looked for something of this kind

from some more masterly and leisurely hand. But being disappointed, and surrounded with importunities from various quarters, he thought himself obliged to undertake it, tho' under peculiar disadvantages.

If it may but contribute to the safety of his country, and to the reformation of his fellow-subjects, his end in this attempt, as well as his desires and prayers, will be answered.

Hanover, August 4, 1755.

P. S. Feb. 14, 1756. The following discourses were sent to the press a few days after the news of the defeat at Monongahala. But the press being necessarily employed about other things, and other unforeseen obstructions happening in the Printer's way, the publication was unavoidably delayed. But it is hoped, it is not now impertinent nor unseasonable; as no very considerable alteration has happened in our public affairs, except the victory obtained by the brave Sir William Johnson at Lake-George; which was a great encouragement to us, tho' not a decisive stroke.

T W O

D I S C O U R S E S, &c.

The M O R N I N G S E R M O N.

Amos iii, 1—6. Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. Can two walk together, except they be agreed? Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing? Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin is for him? Shall one take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all? Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?

IF my late journey deprived me of leisure to make proper preparations for your entertainment to-day; I must own, it has helped me not a little, in furnishing me with materials adapted to this melancholy season. I have seen the staff of life just broken in most places; in a tour of about an hundred miles*. The fields which were wont to look green and flourishing with our staple commodity†, on which our trade so entirely depends,

* Thro' the Counties of Hanover, Goochland, Albemarle, &c.

† Tobacco.

I have seen prepared with labour and pain, but unplanted, or the plants parched and fading. I have seen the fields, that in former seasons promised abundant support for man and beast, and were rich in stately, blooming corn, now withering, and hardly promising a few sapless leaves for our cattle, and a few husky ears for ourselves. I have seen the planter, that was once surrounded with affluence, pointing to his empty withering fields, and ready to smite upon his breast, and say, "Alas! what shall I do for corn to support my family next year? I will just now sell some of my slaves, or any thing in my possession, and that at an under-rate, to purchase a sure supply, if I knew where to get it." This scarcity is the more threatening, as *Pennsylvania*, the granary of *America*, has also suffered severely by the drought. And as the numerous *British* islands in the *West-Indies* depend upon that province for a supply of wheat, and upon us for corn; they will also have a deep share with the colonies on the continent in the effects of this unfruitful season. Indeed there are but few parts of his majesty's dominions, but will be sensibly affected by it, more or less. It seems to be a wide-extended circulating distress; and we should feel it as such.

There is also a general complaint of the stagnation of trade, the scarcity of money, the weight of the various taxes, the high price of goods, and the low price of your staple commodities: And some poor families are already in the very jaws of famine, and the children crying for bread, and there is just none for them. What oppressive, complicated calamities are these? Your own circumstances will teach you sympathy in this case; or if any of you are so happy as to be free from some of them, you have your share in others of them;

them ; and this must affect you with concern for yourselves, and compassion for others, on whom the whole burden may fall with greater oppression.

Were these calamities *single* and *alone*, we could not but feel and lament each of them. But when they are *complicated* and united, they are heavy indeed ; and this is the melancholy case of most parts of this colony.—But Oh *VIRGINIA* ! Oh my country ! even this complication of afflictions is not all thy burden. Besides all this, we ‘ hear the ‘ sound of the trumpet, and see garments rolled ‘ in blood.’ We have received the melancholy confirmation of the news we were so unwilling to believe, concerning the fate of a great part of our army. Our brave general is no more ; near fifty of our best officers, and near six hundred of our men are killed or wounded ; an army of one thousand three hundred men routed ; and all this, (Oh indignant mortification !) all this by four or five hundred undisciplined, cowardly, insidious savages. Who can so much as in thought, take a survey of the bloody field, without all the tender and mournful passions working within him ? ‘ How ‘ are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war ‘ perished ! Ye banks of *Manongahala*, upon you ‘ let there be no dew, neither let there be rain ‘ upon you, nor fields of offerings : For there ‘ the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away *.’ See there the mighty dead rolling in their own blood ! some of them scalped by merciless *Indians*, left without the honours of burial in a howling wilderness, to be devoured by the fowls of heaven, and beasts of prey ! See the wounded writhing with pain, surrounded with all the terrors of death, and groaning out their life, in amazement and consternation ; many dying of wounds not
mor-

mortal, if proper care could have been taken of them! while the remnant that escape, shift for themselves, and fly in the wildest horror, thro' a barren wilderness, without the supports of life! Who can realize such a scene, without sharing in the sufferings of these unhappy men; especially if we consider, they suffer for our sake, *i. e.* for our defence; and whether we may not also add, they suffer for *our sins*, we shall enquire presently. To compleat our loss, our fine artillery, baggage, horses, wheel-carriages, are destroyed, or fallen into the hands of our enemies, to strengthen and enrich them, and to weaken and impoverish us. The *New-England* men indeed are pushing their conquests wherever they turn, under the smiles of heaven, to which they look, and in which they trust; and this we should acknowledge with gratitude, as a singular blessing, and greatly tending to the advantage of the *British* colonies in general; but in another view, methinks it makes us more sensible of our peculiar misfortunes and mortification in this colony; as tho' we were singled out to destruction, and nothing could prosper in which we are concerned. And perhaps the routing of the *French* in their northern settlements may cause them to over-run this colony, in order to make reprisals, and set them on fighting from a stronger principle than ambition, *viz.* a care to provide a place for themselves to go to.

But even this is not all. I have the melancholy news to communicate to you, that sundry families in our frontier counties have been murdered by the barbarous *Indians*. They were asleep in their beds of rest, without dreaming of danger; and the first thing that awakened them was the deadly blow of the bloody ax, or the dying shrieks of a murdered father, a wife, or a child. Some of
them

them were carried captive, and afterwards found in the woods, mangled and half-rotten, with all the marks of barbarity and leisurely torture upon them; scalped or beheaded; "their women ripp'd up, and left in a posture too monstrous to be expressed, and even their *Blood drank* *." I also conversed with an express from *Augusta*, two or three days ago, who told me, that a great number of poor families, that were just beginning the world in the wilderness, and had made flourishing plantations there, were driven from their houses by the terror of these Barbarians, and had fled for safety, in the wildest consternation, over a long and tedious tract of rocks and mountains, near two hundred miles, into the more thickly inhabited parts of the country. There they now are, men, women and children, without any covering but the inclement sky, exposed to the dews of the night, and the scorching heat of the day, without bread, except what the charity of others affords them: For they were obliged to leave their plentiful harvests behind them un-reaped; and they could carry with them but little of their household furniture, their stock, or any of their possessions: They were glad they could "get their own lives for a prey." As for those families that live in the populous parts of that county, they are obliged to gather together into forts, where the women and children continue in crowds night and day; and the men by day venture out, though in constant fear of their lives, to look after their farms, and make a little provision for their subsistence; and as the drought there is very severe, it must be a scanty provision

B in-

* These are the words of a letter from a gentleman in *Augusta* county, who was a witness of these scenes of unnatural barbarity.

indeed. In these forts, which are very numerous in various parts, they now meet to worship God: And they dare not go up to the sanctuary, without carrying their arms along with them; and they are always in trembling expectation to be surprized by the enemy.

Our happy situation, about the center of the colony, has kept us hitherto in peace and safety. But it may not be always so with us: The inroads of the enemy may reach even to us. Or, if we should be disturbed only by distant alarms; yet these unhappy creatures are proper objects of our compassion, and of our intercession before God. They are our *Brethren*, fellow-christians, and members of the same *Body politic* with us: And it is in the body politic, as in the *natural body*; when *one* member suffers, *all* the members suffer with it. To all this I may add, the poor state of our militia, which has hitherto been a mere farce.—The scarcity of arms and ammunition in the country.—The stupid carelessness, or sneaking cowardice, of not a few of our inhabitants,—and the danger of insurrection and massacre from some of our own gloomy domestics. And these are very alarming circumstances, that may justly excite our fears; though they are not desperate; nor should they cause us to despond, and give up ourselves for lost.

I know I should mingle a great deal of cheerful *light* with these gloomy *shades*, to form an exact picture of the present state of our country. Notwithstanding all these calamities, we still enjoy a rich variety of blessings. Though God is risen up to punish us, yet he does not punish us as our iniquities deserve; nor strip us of every comfort. As yet, we enjoy food and raiment; and the scarcity of one part of the country, is ren-

rendered more tolerable by the prospect of plenty in other parts, which have been refreshed with rain from heaven: And even this threatening and melancholy year, may yet compare with the most fruitful and happy years of some populous countries on our globe. Our Northern forces have more than made reprisals for our loss; and the success of our fleet, under admiral *Boscawen*, has given a considerable blow to the power of *France* by sea. Our inhabitants are numerous, and some of them resolute, and capable of making a good defence; and a considerable part of our forces have survived the fatal ninth of *July*, in which so many of them were slaughtered. These and sundry other things have an encouraging appearance; and we cannot overlook them without ingratitude, and excessive despondence. But notwithstanding these favourable circumstances, and notwithstanding such future turns of providence as may make for us, it is beyond all doubt, this will be the *most melancholy and calamitous year that Virginia has ever seen*; and he is a stupid creature indeed, that can flatter himself with better hopes. To such, if there be such among you, I may address the words of *Jeremiah* *, ‘They have belied the Lord, and said, It is not he, neither shall evil come upon us, neither shall we see sword or famine.’ And over such I may take up the complaint of the prophet *Isaiah* †, *Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see, nor labour to escape the falling blow: but they shall see, to their cost, and be ashamed of their foolish presumption.* But I hope you are generally alarmed, and would willingly improve such afflictive dispensations to the best purposes;

B 2

to

* *Jeremiah* v. 12.† *Isa.* xxvi. 11.

to which I hope to lead you in the exposition of the words I have read to you.

It would certainly be an instance of the greatest stupidity, to groan under these calamities, without carrying our enquiries so far as,—Who is the proper original author of them?—What is the reason that God hath withheld so many of his usual blessings from us, and afflicted us with so many distresses; and that notwithstanding our past deliverances, and the many privileges with which he has been pleased to distinguish us?—How long shall these judgments be continued? and what is the readiest way to escape them? These are very proper enquiries in the present situation of our country; and to each of these my text will furnish us with an answer; as I shall shew you, when I have hinted a word or two concerning the original occasion of this prophecy.

The prophet *Amos* was sent to the *Israelites*, towards the latter end of their kingdom, to warn them of the sore judgments of famine, war, and captivity, which were just coming upon them, for their long course of sinning from generation to generation. It was to these *Israelites* that the words of my text were primarily directed; and they are equally suitable to us in our present circumstances, which are so like to theirs.

Let us now enquire,

I. Who is the *proper original author* or inflictor of the calamities under which our country groans? Is our country under no influence or power, but what is visible? Are all our affairs under the management of *Chance* or *Fortune*? Or is this world the *absolute, independant* kingdom of men, without any subordination to a superior power? Or do natural causes operate, and accomplish events of
them.

themselves, without any dependence upon the great Creator? Alas! do we ly at the mercy of blind causes, or of the strongest arm, or the most politic head? Are we to look no higher than the *Clouds*, for the cause of drought? And are we to trace the origin of the defeat of our army, no farther than the power or stratagems of the *French* or *Indians*? If this be the case, what a miserable world is this? What a state of *Anarchy* and *Confusion*? Then we have nothing to trust to, but the arm of flesh; we are cut off from the relief of prayer to an all-ruling God; we are cast off from the rock of confidence in his all-governing providence: For why should we pray to, or trust in one, that does not concern himself in our affairs? But is this really the case? Is the world left thus without a supreme universal head? Every pious heart must answer, "I hope not; or I am undone." And I can assure you, your hope is well grounded. 'The Lord reigneth; let the earth be glad*. He hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all†.' 'He doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou||?' Our country in particular is a *little Territory* of his dominion; and the calamities we now feel, are the chastisements, or the judgments, of his fatherly, or vindictive hand. 'Is there evil in a city,' or in a country, 'and the Lord hath not done it?' No; he himself hath told us, 'I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things§.' 'See now that I am He, even I am He; and there is no God with me. I kill, and I make

* Psal. xcvi. 1. † & ciii. 19. ‡ Dan. iv. 35. § Isa. xiv. 7.

‘make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand*.’

It is indeed but seldom, that he works with his own *immediate* hand, without the instrumentality of secondary causes. He has a whole *Universe* of *Servants*; as many creatures so many servants; and he has work for them *all*; and keeps them all busy, to accomplish some grand design of his, whether they know and design it, or not. Men and angels, beasts, birds and insects, the sun and stars, fire and water, winds and storms; in short, every creature, rational and irrational, animate and inanimate, the most furious and ungovernable, as well as the most gentle and manageable, tyrants, and hurricanes, as well as *Gabriel* or the sun; all have their stations assigned them; all are doing his work, either of goodness or justice, in the grand scheme of the universe. Some of them know his will, and delight to do it: Some of them do not know it, or do not regard it; but follow their own selfish and perverse will; and some of them are naturally incapable of all knowledge and design; but they are all *equally* his servants; and by them all, he accomplishes his work with equal exactness. Storms and tempests as punctually obey his orders, as the angels in heaven. It is the character of those illustrious beings that, ‘they *hearken unto the voice of his word* †; yet hear the same character of the *stormy wind*, ‘Praise the Lord.—Fire and hail, snow and vapours, *stormy wind fulfilling his word* †.’

There are various causes of rain and drought; but they are all employed by him, and subject to him. The treacherous *French* and savage *Indians* have routed our army; but it was all ordered by the providence of God, and all the causes and oc-
ca-

* Deut. xxxii. 29. † Psalm ciii. 20, 21. † Psalm cxlviii. 8.

casions of it were disposed by him. There is *no evil*, i. e. no calamity, in our land, but *the Lord hath done it*. Secondary causes indeed produce their *proper* effects, and bring events to pass as *naturally*, as if they acted entirely from *themselves*. But this is so far from disproving the divine agency, that it does display its astonishing wisdom, and its agreeableness to the nature of the various ministers of providence. To rule the world as *really*, as if he managed it with his own *immediate* hand; and yet to rule it so *agreeably* to the nature of his creatures, as if he left them to themselves, and did not intermeddle with it: To rule it *effectually* and *incontroulably*; and yet so *gently* and *secretly*, that his agency is very often not perceived; to do his *own* will, and yet let his creatures do *their own*; What amazing wisdom is this! what a mysterious, perfect administration! Such is the government of the universal ruler, under which we live; and we ought not to make the excellency of it an objection against its reality.

There is not so much need, I presume, to convince your *Reason* of this truth, as to inculcate it upon you, to make your *Hearts* sensible of it. Certainly it is no *Extravagance* of faith, it is no superstitious imagination, to believe, that God still rules the world he has made, and that he has not cast it off as a disregarded orphan. A man need not be an *immoderate* or an *over-credulous* believer, to admit this. This is one of the first principles of *natural* religion, as well as a fundamental doctrine of *Christianity*. This is the avowed belief of our country; and sure, there is not one among you, that dare so much as secretly deny it.

But alas! what little influence has this *common* faith upon the temper and conduct of the generality?

rality? How many with this profession in their mouths, and this persuasion in their heads, are *Atheists* in heart and practice? Do they practically believe that God disposes all events, who do not take notice of his agency in them; but direct all their attention to visible causes. Do you really believe this, who can ly down at night, and rise in the morning, without commending yourselves to his protection, and imploring his blessing? Do you believe it, who can review the numberless blessings and deliverances of your life, without falling upon your knees in affectionate gratitude before your gracious benefactor? Is this your faith, you who are hardly ever sensible of the providence of God in the success or disappointments of your pursuits? You who can 'eat, and forget God;' you who enjoy the blessing of the sun and rain, and the fruits of the earth; and yet go on thoughtless of your divine benefactor, as the cattle of your stall, or who look upon these as things of course, or the fruits of your own industry; you that can behold withering fields, and scanty harvests, without bowing the knee to God, imploring his mercy, and without mourning for the sins of our guilty land, and smiting your own breasts, saying, 'What have I done?' you that 'groan by reason of affliction, and yet do not enquire, Where is God my maker, that giveth songs in the night *?' you that can hear of preparations for war, and trust in the number or accomplishments of our army for success, without humbly looking up to the Lord of armies; you that murmur and fret at disappointments and afflictions, as though you would form an insurrection against the king of heaven as a tyrant, instead of humbling yourselves under his righteous hand

* Job xxxv. 10.

hand as mourning penitents; you that utterly despond at the prospect of famine, and the rumour of war, invasion and blood, as tho' Jehovah had abdicated his throne, and renounced the government of the world, and you had no God to fly to; you that can see his threatening hand, and yet laugh at the falling blow, as though he were not in earnest, or you could easily escape it; you that live in the world, as tho' it were not a territory of his government; you that make natural causes your God, by ascribing all events to them.—Do you practically and really believe that God is the ruler of the world, and of your country and your affairs in particular? Do you believe this, while your conduct and temper are so contrary to it? No; you are practical Atheists, greater monsters than speculative Atheists. Whatever you profess in words, you do in heart and life renounce and abjure Jehovah from being the governor of the world; you virtually say he is not the ruler of your country: Your country is invaded, or protected, by an arm of flesh; and God has nothing to do with it; your plenty or famine depends upon clouds and earth, without a God to manage them. Oh! how many hearts in our land mutter this treason against the king of heaven? On how many practices is this blasphemy inscribed in legible characters? How is our country over-run with this kind of Atheism! How many *Fools* are there 'that say in their hearts, there is no God*?' Their language is, 'How doth God know? Can he judge thro' the thick cloud? He walketh at ease in the circuit of heaven †.' And is it not time for God to arise, and *assert* his government? Since gentler measures will not do, is it not time

C

for

* Job xxii. 13, 14.

† Psalm xiv. 1.

for him to make us sensible of it, by ‘terrible things in righteousness?’ May he not constrain us to look to *him* for help, by leaving us *nothing else* to look to? O my country! it will never be well with thee, ‘till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth them ‘to whomsoever he will *.’ Acknowledge him thy lord and king: Receive blessings as from his hand: Submit to calamities as from his rod: Do this, and it shall be well with thee, and with thy children. To teach thee this, O *Virginia*, thy land is now languishing with drought, and alarmed with the terrors of war. Therefore learn this lesson, lest other nations learn it from thy destruction, Can Jehovah always bear to be disowned in his own dominions; or suffer disloyalty and rebellion to pass unpunished, under an empty complimentary profession of allegiance? No, he will extort from his enemies that confession, ‘Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth †’ Therefore ‘be ye afraid of the sword; for wrath bringeth the punishment of the sword, *That ye may know there is a judgment ‡.*

Let us now proceed to the II^d enquiry:

What is the *Reason* that God has withheld so many of his usual *Blessings* from us? why has he not bless’d us as formerly, with peace and plenty? why is he not with us, and why does he not give us the comfortable tokens of his gracious presence? Alas! my brethren, the melancholy reason is too plain; we are not *agreed* with him, nor he with us: A great difference subsists between us and our God; and if it continue, we must *part*, we must part for ever; for *can two walk together except they be agreed?* Can a holy, just and jealous God

* Dan. iv. 17.

† Psalm lvi. 11.

‡ Job xix. 29.

God maintain a friendly intercourse with a sinful, impenitent people? No, Sirs; they must part; and wo unto them if he depart from them*. There is a controversy that subsists between God and *Virginia*; a controversy not about trifles, but about the perogatives of his crown, and the rights of his government; a controversy *which* shall be obeyed, whether his holy and righteous will, or the perverse will and wicked lusts and passions of men; whether he or his creatures should be most loved and regarded; whether holiness be the only way to happiness, and whether his son *Jesus*, whom he has sent into the world, and made known in our country, shall be owned and loved as a Saviour and Lord. He insists upon it, that the concerns of eternity are of infinitely greater importance than those of time; but many of the inhabitants of our land are of another mind: They pursue the riches, the honour, the pleasures of this world, as their great concern, and take but very little thought or pains about their everlasting state. Let God be disobeyed, let Christ be neglected, let heaven be lost, let their souls be damned: They care not; they *will* have their pleasures; they *will* drink, and game, and swear, and whore: they *will* pursue the world with eagerness and avarice. God insists upon it, that if a people professing his name, would enjoy his favourable presence with them, they must abandon their national vices, and turn to him: Our countrymen differ from him in this; they expect the blessings of his providence, and yet go on impenitently in their sins. He assures them that sin will destroy them at last: They will not believe him, but hope for happiness, tho' they indulge themselves in it. He

* Hosea ix. 12.

recommends holiness of heart and life, as absolutely necessary to everlasting happiness; and as the most pleasant and delightful course. They count it a needless, or a moping, dull, melancholy thing, and hope to be saved without it. He has pronounced *Jesus* the only Saviour; but they are not solicitous about an interest in him, nor thoro'ly sensible of their need of him; but flatter themselves their own works will go a great way towards their salvation. They also differ widely in *disposition* and temper. He loves holiness; they loath it. He hates all sin, in its most alluring forms; they delight in it, and will indulge it. Thus it has been for a *long time*: We have walked contrary to God. He has waited a long time to see if we would make up the difference; but men insist they are right, or at best put him off with a purpose to repent in some uncertain hereafter, which he foresees they will never arrive at, or never improve. He would have them view the present posture of their affairs in a *religious* light, and humble themselves before him: He has commissioned the drought and the sword as his ministers to preach repentance to them; but few of them 'repent of their wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turneth to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle*. The Lord of hosts calls them to weeping and mourning, and girding with sackcloth; but instead of this, Behold joy, and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine,' as tho' they acted upon that Epicurean maxim, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die†.' What a wide difference is here? And can a righteous God walk in friendship with thee, O *Virginia*, while this disagreement continues?

No,

* Jer. viii, 6,

† Isaiah xxii. 12, 13.

No, he must walk contrary to thee; his soul must depart from thee, and he will leave thee to thyself, or give thee up to thine enemies, that thou mayst feel and lament his absence, and sue for peace. 'Therefore 'agree with thine adversary quickly,' lest he bid thee adieu for ever. Down upon thy knees before him; consent to his proposals; labour to be holy as he is holy; labour to imbibe his spirit, and contract the same temper: 'Be instructed,' O *Virginia*, 'lest his soul depart from thee *,' and with him peace and plenty take their flight. Be reconciled to him; give up the cause, and stand out against him no longer; so will he yet return, and walk in thee, and dwell among thy inhabitants, as his sons and daughters.

But *why* has he inflicted upon our country such *calamities*? We have seen he is the author of them, and that *there is no evil* in our land, but *the Lord hath done it*. And why hath he done it? Has he made the heavens as brass over the heads, and the earth as iron under the feet, of an *innocent* people? Has he defeated an army that was to defend a *righteous* country? Has he done all this without cause? No; *Will a lion roar in the forest when he hath no prey?* Will he collect his rage, and spring out of his thicket with a hideous roar, when he sees nothing that is a fit prey for him? No; he will not fly at a rock or a tree, but at some animal which instinct teaches him to devour. *'Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing?'* No; but when he has got his prey in his deadly paw, he roars over it, and tears it to pieces. And would the righteous judge of all the earth *roar* against us, in his judgments, if we were not a fit *prey* for his vengeance? Would he blast the fruits of the earth, and *roar* against

us

us in the horrid sound of war, if our sins had not made us fit to be devoured by his righteous judgments? No; *innocence* may always be sure of protection under his government; and *penitent* sinners may hope for his mercy; but *impenitent* sinners he will punish in the world to come for their personal sins; and impenitent nations he will visit with his righteous judgments, for their national sins, in this world: I say, *in this world*; for it is only in *this* world that they subsist in a *national* capacity; and consequently, this is the only place in which they can be punished in that capacity. The Lord's voice therefore cries to our country; and what does it cry? It proclaims us a guilty, impenitent people; a fit *prey* for divine justice: And it is high time for God to come out against us as a *roaring lion*. This dreadful style is often used by the prophets, when they describe the judgments of an angry God, against a guilty people; and we may tremble, lest it be verified in our country. 'I will be unto *Ephraim* as a *lion*, and as a *young lion*, to the house of *Judah*: I, even I will *tear*, and go away: I will take away, and none shall rescue him *.' To a people that had abused his mercies, and ungratefully forgotten him, as we have done, this is the terrible language of a provoked God, 'I will be unto them, as a *lion*, as a *leopard* by the way will I observe them: I will meet them as a *bear* that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rent the caul of their hearts, and I will devour them like a lion †.'

There is another metaphor used in my text, to express the same alarming truth. 'Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin is for

* Hosea v. 14.

† Hosea xiii. 7, 8.

'for him?' Can it be ensnared and taken, where no snare is laid for it? No; and can a people fall under calamities, when God has not spread the net of his judgments to take them? Or would a righteous God seize them with his judgments, if they had not deserved it by their sins? No; it is sin that laid the snare in which we are fallen: It is sin that has shut the heavens, and restrained the clouds from dropping down fatness on the parched earth; It is sin that way-laid our army, and cut them off: It is the sin of the *country* for which they fought, rather than their own: For we are to consider soldiers, not as acting for themselves, but for their country; and they stand or fall, according to the designs of God towards that country, without any regard to their *personal* character. If God has a gracious design towards a people, he will make their arms victorious, and defend them against their enemies, however wicked the men may be whom they employ as soldiers. But if the iniquities of a people are full, and he intends to scourge them, then he will defeat even an army of saints, and determine the event of war against them. And was it the *sins* of our land that cut off our brave general, and so many of our choice men? Alas! what a shocking addition is this to our grief for their loss? This seems to indite us as guilty of their blood. O VIRGINIA! what a mischief have thy sins done? God would not thus afflict a righteous or a penitent people: The justice of his government is as obvious a truth, as any principle of natural or revealed religion: and the judgments of God upon a land are infallible evidences of general guilt and impenitence.

'Your sins,' O my countrymen, 'have with-
'holden

holden good things from you *.' Have you not procured these judgments to yourselves, in that you have forsaken the Lord your God? It is your own wickedness that now corrects you, and your own backslidings reprove you.' Know therefore 'and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that you have forsaken the Lord your God, and that his fear is not in you †. O that my people had hearkened to the voice of God, and walked in his ways! Then he would soon have subdued their enemies, and fed them also with the finest of the wheat ‡.' But alas! 'they have rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit;' they have despised his chastisements, and abused his mercies, therefore he 'has turned to be their enemy, and fought against them §.'

But where do those enemies of our country lurk? Where shall we find those sins that have brought these judgments upon our land! Alas! we can easily find them, without a critical search. Some of them *brave* the skies with an undaunted brow, and do not seek to lie concealed. We meet *gigantic* forms of vice, wherever we turn. How is our land polluted with drunkenness, swearing, lying, defrauding, whoredom, sabbath-breaking, and all the horrid kinds of profaneness and daring impiety? What irreverence of God? what contempt or neglect of religion and public worship? what profanation of divine ordinances? What swarms of prayerless families all over our land? What a general neglect of the souls of the poor negroes, and in some instances, what barbarities towards them? What a spirit of trifling and levity? What extravagance in gaming, and other foolish

* Jer. v. 25. † Jer. ii. 17, 19. ‡ Psal. lxxxi. 13, 16.
§ Isa. lxiii. 10.

foolish or criminal diversions, especially among people of high life, and affluent fortunes? What an idle waste, what a wanton abuse, of the blessings of providence? What a stupid disregard of divine threatnings and chastisements? And what a sullen incorrigibleness, or unbelieving despondency, under them? God may complain of our country, as of the *Jews*; 'In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction *.' 'Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more †.' In short, if you form an idea of a *Christian* from your *Bible*, and then take a view of the inhabitants of our land; if you observe their conduct in their retirements, in their families, in public company, or in the worship of God, alas! how *few*; how very *few* of them can you call *sincere practical* Christians? How are all evidences of the fear and love of God lost among the generality? They live as if they had no concern with him; nor he with them. Their *own interest*, their own lusts and passions, are the rule of their conduct. Alas! what a melancholy survey of our country is this? My heart pains me, while I review it, and forebodes some dreadful thing coming upon us. 'Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation, as this? Ah! sinful nation, a people loaded with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corruptets, they have forsaken the Lord; they have provoked the holy One of *Israel* unto anger, they are gone away backwards ‡.' Therefore the tokens of his displeasure are now upon them. And who must not weep for thee, O *MARYLAND*! a country hap-

D

* Jer. ii. 30. † Isa. i. 5. ‡ Isa. i. 4.

py in situation, improved by art, and hitherto blessed of heaven; but now undermined and tottering by thy *own sins*. Thy sins proclaim thee obnoxious to the judgments of God: And the judgments of God now hanging over thee, proclaim thy sins and impenitence.

But alas! these *visible* and open vices are not the only cause of God's present controversy with our land: The original cause lies deep, even in the *hearts* of the inhabitants: The most dangerous enemies lurk in their breasts: Look there, and 'you will see yet greater abominations.' What filthy lusts, what mischievous passions harbour there? How many hearts among us are cold or lukewarm towards God, and his son Jesus Christ, and never felt his love shed abroad in them? How many are secretly disaffected to holiness, and dislike the purity of his sacred law? How many secretly indulge themselves in those works of darkness, which would blush to see the sun? How many thoughtless, trifling worldly minds, that confine all their attention to the things of this life; and have little or no thought about the important concerns of eternity? How many impenitent, flinty hearts, that never felt the kindly, ingenuous relents of repentance for all their sins? How many old, unregenerate hearts, that have never been changed by the almighty power of God? How many that are wholly unacquainted with the various exercises, the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears that are familiar to every true Christian? How many that never embraced the Lord Jesus as a Saviour, and submitted to him as their mediatorial king? On the other hand, how few are the hearts, in which the graces of the Spirit are implanted and cherished? how few feel the
work-

workings of love, faith, repentance towards God and Jesus Christ? Alas! how few hearts delight in the service of God, and hate every false way? How few are in earnest in seeking the kingdom of God, and his righteousness? Alas! my brethren, must not your hearts bleed when you think of these things? Can a country over-run with such rebels, that have such disaffected hearts, hope always to escape? 'Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged upon such a nation as this?' Is it any wonder that the *lion should roar*, when he hath found so fit a prey? or that we should be *taken*, when our sins have laid such a *gin*, for us? He will execute justice upon sinners as *individuals*, in the eternal world: But *now* is the time for him to deal with them as a *society*. And will not the thoughtless creatures tremble before him, and return to him? Sinners, your country is now bleeding and languishing by the wounds you have given it; and are your hearts proof against the energy of such a thought? REPENT! O my countrymen, REPENT! REPENT! Down upon your knees before your injured sovereign; bewail your rebellion; confess your guilt, and implore forgiveness. If sin is the cause of your present sufferings, repentance must be the cure; and you have reason to hope, it will be an effectual remedy. Yet, you must remember, that faith in the blood of Jesus must be joined along with it. Your repentance can make no atonement for your sin; *that* you can expect only in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, that was offered once for all. Therefore away to Jesus, ye perishing creatures; accept of his righteousness, ye guilty sinners. 'Look unto him, and be saved,' O VIRGINIA,

'situated in the ends of the earth*.' Let the name of Jesus come in reputation in our guilty land. But as my voice can reach only to you, my hearers, let me insist, that whatever others do, you will not be accessory to the ruin of your country, but will repent, reform, and fly to Jesus. And with this advice, I shall dismiss you for a few minutes.

* Isa. xlv, 22,

An



A N

H Y M N.

I.

WH I L E o'er our guilty land, O Lord,
 We view the terrors of thy sword;
 While heav'n her fruitful showers denies,
 And nature round us fades and dies.

II.

While clouds of vengeance o'er our head,
 Seem thickning, and pronounce us dead;
 Oh! whither shall the helpless fly?
 To whom but thee direct their cry?

III.

The helpless sinner's cries and tears,
Are grown familiar to thine ears :
Oft has thy mercy sent relief,
When all was fear and helpless grief.

IV.

On thee, our guardian God, we call;
 Before thy throne of grace we fall;
 Oh! is there no deliv'rance there?
 Or must we perish in despair?

V.

V.

*See we repent, we weep, we mourn ;
To our forsaken God we turn ;
O spare our guilty country ; spare
Thy church which thou hast planted here.*

VI.

*Revive our withering fields with rain ;
Let peace compose our land again :
Silence the horrid noise of war ;
O spare a guilty people ; spare !*

VII.

*We plead thy grace, indulgent God ;
We plead thy Son's atoning blood ;
We plead thy gracious promises ;
Nor are these unavailing Pleas.*

VIII.

*These pleas by faith urg'd at thy throne,
Have brought ten thousand blessings down
On guilty lands in helpless woe ;
Let them prevail to save us too.*

The AFTERNOON SERMON.

Amos iii. 1—6. *Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.—Shall one take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all? Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid?—*

IN the foregoing sermon, I left unfinished an inquiry of great importance to us in the present situation of our COUNTRY, viz. “What is the reason that God hath withheld so many of his usual blessings from us?”—This part of the enquiry I have already answered; and I hope your hearts are still under the impressions of it. If he does not walk amicably with us, it is because we are *not agreed*: And if he afflicts us, it is because we have sinned against him. *The lion hath roared* against us, because he hath found us a proper Prey. But it remains for us to enquire, “Why he hath done this, notwithstanding our past blessings and deliverances, and the many privileges with which he hath been pleased to distinguish us?” We may gather an answer to this from

from his conduct towards the *Israelites*, related in the first and second verses of my text.

The *Israelites* were the posterity of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, those favourite Patriarchs, with whom God condescended to enter into covenant, both for them and their seed. They were a family miraculously delivered from *Egyptian* slavery, conducted thro' an hideous wilderness, into a land of liberty and plenty, and protected there by an immediate providence. But their highest privilege was, that God had taken them for *his church* and peculiar people, favoured them with a revelation of his will, and a religion from heaven, and sent his prophets to them, to instruct and admonish them.—But that ungrateful people forgot their obligations to their divine benefactor, grew weary of his service, rebelled against him, and became debauched in principles and morals. And will it secure them, when thus degenerate, that they were once distinguished with so many blessings, and still professed themselves the church of God? Could this secure them against his judgments? No; so far from it, that these very circumstances increased their guilt, and rendered their punishments more certain and severe. *You only*, saith the Lord, *have I known of all the families of the earth: I have chosen you to be my church and people, while I suffered other nations to walk in darkness, and at a distance from me:* And what follows from hence? Not, *therefore I will grant you greater indulgence in sin;* or, *I will overlook it in you, though I might punish it in other nations:* but, *therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities:* Whoever escape, you shall not: tho' I should bear with the sins of others, I will not bear with yours, whom I have known and distinguished from them.

There

There are many good reasons for this peculiar severity towards the professing people of God.—He has a particular *Property* in such; and therefore he expects particular obedience from them.—He has a special *Kindness* for them, and laid them under peculiar *Obligations* of gratitude; and consequently their undutifulness and ingratitude must touch him very near. A man is more affected with the unkind treatment of a friend or a child, than a stranger or an enemy.—God is peculiarly *related* to such a people; and therefore their wickedness reflects more dishonour upon him, than that of those who do not profess his Name.—God may also have designs of special grace towards some of them, and he may chastise them for their amendment, and in order to deliver them from the more dreadful punishments of the eternal world. A Father may correct his *child* for a fault that he would over-look in a stranger.—Such a people have peculiar *helps* and advantages, and are under special obligations; and consequently their sin is much more aggravated, than that of Heathens, who are not in such favourable circumstances for religion. On all these accounts it is just, reasonable, and indeed necessary, that God should punish with peculiar severity the sins of his people, on whom his name is called; and that they should not fly to his altar for protection, in their rebellion against him.

Let us now apply these things to ourselves and our country. God has distinguished us with a rich variety of blessings, above most people in the world, and made our country a favourite spot of the globe. The first planters of this colony, passed thro' surprising vicissitudes; and were more than once in danger of being entirely cut off by their *Indian* predecessors. But thro' the tender

guardianship of providence, they survived all these dangers : And now, this wilderness is improved into a fruitful field ; and we have enjoyed as long an uninterrupted peace and plenty, as perhaps any country upon earth. Our colony has prodigiously increased of late years in the number of its inhabitants ; and in extent of ground, it is perhaps equal to our mother country. It has been an happy refuge to the poor ; who swarm the streets, and crowd the work-houses and hospitals, in other countries : Here they generally enjoy a very comfortable subsistence by moderate industry ; and hardly any of them are incapable of providing for themselves.

These are great blessings ; but they are not the *greatest* with which heaven has distinguished our land. He has brought his gospel, as a vine from afar, and planted it in this wilderness, that was once the residence of Heathen savages and wild beasts. The *BIBLE* is, or may be, the common blessing of our whole land ; and none who enjoy that directory to everlasting life, have reason to complain, that they are left wholly destitute of the means of salvation. We are a *Christian*, a *Protestant* country ; and how few parts of the world can say so ? I might add what will not appear incredible to some of you, who have been the happy subjects or witnesses of it, that God has sent his gospel into sundry parts of our land, and among us in particular, in its purity, and attended with his own almighty power, to make it effectual to renew many depraved hearts, and reform many vicious lives : And wherever such a work is going on, I shall rejoice in it as a *Work of God*, whatever name it bears : Yes, my brethren, I shall rejoice to see *Christianity*, pure, practical
Chri-

Christianity, Christianity free from the encumbrance of party-names, flourish and encrease; and without this, it is but little matter what party is uppermost, or has the sorry sanction of a civil establishment.

With these important privileges has God favoured our land, and us in particular. Thus graciously has he *known* and distinguished us, above most of the families of the earth. But will these favours *indemnify* an ungrateful land, in the abuse of them, or warrant them to offend against their peculiar benefactor? Will this *neglected* Bible, will this *abused* gospel, will these *profaned* ordinances, shelter you from the judgments of God, when your sins cry aloud for them? Will a *slighted* Saviour deliver you? Will his *profaned* name sanctify your crimes, and be a mark of protection to you? Does the *abuse* of mercy, promise you *farther* mercy? Does the ungrateful forgetfulness of past deliverances, encourage you to hope for future? Do not these things, on the other hand, give you reason to fear the contrary, that ‘*because* he hath known you above most of the ‘*nations of the earth, therefore* he will punish you ‘*for all your iniquities?*’ Our enemies are perfidious *French* Papists, and savage *Indian* Heathens; they may be as bad, or worse, than we, in all respects, but this, that we sin against more light and love, and break thro’ more endearing obligations. Yet he may justly use them as his rod to scourge us, because he is more nearly related to us, and more warmly resents our provocations, than theirs. The *Babylonians* were an empire of wicked Heathen idolaters; and yet he employed them to punish the *Jews*, his peculiar people. Indeed it is very common for him to employ wicked men in this drudgery; hence they

are called his hand, his sword*, the rod of his anger, his ax, his saw †, &c. that is, the instruments and executioners of his vengeance.

‘Therefore ‘trust not,’ O VIRGINIA, ‘trust not in lying words,’ saying, ‘The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these. Go to the place in *Shiloh*, where God set his name at the first, and see what he has done there for the wickedness of his people *Israel* ‡.’ Go to *Jerusalem*, to *Antioch*, to *Greece*, to *Rome*, and see what powerful empires he has demolished, what flourishing countries he has laid desolate, what stately cities he has buried in ruins, and what numerous and established churches he has rooted out; and all this for *their sins*; and particularly for their ungrateful abuse of mercies and privileges, and above all for the abuse of the gospel. Be warned by these dreadful examples, O my country; lest thou also share in their doom.

The III. Enquiry now remains, How long, we may expect, these calamities will continue on our land? And what is the most promising method to remove or escape them?

God has always some wise design in all his dispensations, and particularly in the inflicting of calamities: And his design in it, as far as we may venture to determine, is either to *reform*, or to *punish* a people. I know of no national calamity, but what is intended for one or the other of these ends; and generally, *both* are intended with regard to different persons. God may design to *chasten* and *amend* some as a Father; and by the same stroke to *harden* and *punish* others, who are ripe for his judgments.

These

* Psal. xvii. 13, 14. † Isa. x. 5, 15. ‡ Jer. xii. 4. 12.

These are his designs towards thee, O my country, in the present critical juncture; to *amend* thee, or to *destroy* thee; to bring some of thy inhabitants to repentance, and to harden the incorrigible, and visit them with his despised vengeance. And can we hope he will remove his angry hand from us, till he has accomplished his design one way or other? 'Shall one take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all?' says my text. No, he will let it lie there, 'till he has caught his prey, if possible. And will a wise God scatter his judgments for no end at all? or will he remove them, before they have answered his end? No; they shall accomplish the thing for which he sent them.

Here then, my country, thou art cast into a dilemma between *reformation* and *punishment*. Thou hast no other alternative, but REPENT, and LIVE; or, CONTINUE IMPENITENT, and PERISH. I will not determine in what particular manner and degree God will accomplish either of these designs; this is only known to himself. And alas! I can give you no great encouragement, that his gracious design of *reformation* is likely to be accomplished on the *generality*. Multitudes rather seem hardened in impenitence, or sunk in *infidel* distress. They do not regard the divine hand in the present miseries of their country; nor penitently reflect upon their sins, as the cause of them. The prospect of scarcity, and the alarm of war, only throws them into a panic, and perhaps extorts a transient prayer from them. 'Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them*.' But alas! I see but few evidences of their being awakened to be religious in earnest,

and

* Isa. xxvi. 16.

and to turn to the Lord with all their hearts. And indeed, all the punishments they are capable of, will never bring them to this, without the kindly alluring influence of divine grace. Therefore cry earnestly to God for this blessing; which can make the miseries of our land the happiest events that ever you saw. The conversion and salvation of sinners, is a greater blessing than peace, or the abundance of corn and wine. And Oh! we cannot but hope, notwithstanding some discouraging appearances, that this may be a season fruitful of converts. We humbly hope, that 'by this shall the iniquity of *Virginia* be purged; and that this will be the fruit, to take away our sins*.' Blessed fruit indeed! if withering fields and a ravaged country can produce this, it will more than make up our loss. This is a critical time with our country; the minds of men are more awake than usual; and if God is pleased now to set in with his grace, we may see an extensive reformation in our sinful land. O pray that such a season may not pass by in vain: Pray that God would now work while men begin to grow a little thoughtful. If this season pass by, and leave sinners as they are, they will indeed have reason to fear, that 'the harvest is passed, and the summer ended, and they are not saved.' If the inhabitants of the world will not learn righteousness, when the judgments of God are in the earth, there is little reason to hope they ever will.

O sinners! now make one vigorous, united effort to enter in at the strait gate. Now fall in earnest to prayer, reading, hearing, meditation, self-examination. 'Search and try your ways, and turn again unto the Lord †. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while

* Isa. xxvii. 9. † Lam. iii. 40.

' while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his
 ' way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and
 ' let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy
 ' upon him; and to our God, and he will abundantly
 ' pardon *. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; purify
 ' your hearts, ye double-minded; Be afflicted, and
 ' mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned into
 ' mourning, and your joy into heaviness †. O VIRGINIA, ' with thy heart
 ' from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved; How
 ' long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee ‡?
 ' Therefore, saith the Lord, turn ye to me with all
 ' your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping,
 ' and with mourning. Rent your heart, and not
 ' your garment, and turn unto the Lord your God:
 ' For Oh! he is GRACIOUS and MERCIFUL; ' I proclaim
 ' it again with a joyful repetition, ' he is GRACIOUS
 ' and MERCIFUL, slow to anger and of great kindness
 ' and repenteth him of the evil.' Thus repent and turn
 ' to the Lord; and ' then will the Lord be jealous for
 ' our land; and pity his people. Yea, the Lord will
 ' answer and say, ' behold, I will give you corn, and
 ' wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith;
 ' and I will drive far from you the Northern army,'
 ' that are ravaging your country. ' Fear not, O land;
 ' be glad, and rejoice: For the Lord will do great
 ' things. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field; ' God
 ' takes care even of you; ' and the pastures of the
 ' wilderness will yet spring. He will yet give rain
 ' moderately, the former and the latter rain; and the
 ' floors shall yet be full of wheat. And ye shall eat
 ' in plenty, and be satisfied; and praise the name of
 ' the Lord that hath dealt wonderously with you §. This, my
 ' brethren, is

* Isa. lv. 6, 7. † Jam. iv. 8, 9. ‡ Jer. iv. 14. § Joel xi. 12.
 and xviii. 26.

is the way of safety; this is the way to prevent or remove the judgments of God from your country. Or, if the reformation should not be so general, as to deliver the colony from them; yet such of you as repent, will not lose your labour: you shall escape the everlasting punishment of the world to come, and be received into immortal happiness and glory; and this is of more importance than any or all temporal deliverances.

What stupidity must it be, to refuse to make this improvement of the present calamities under which our country groans? *Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid?* says my text. Shall a public alarm be given of the approach of the enemy, and shall none be alarmed, and prepare to fly, or to defend themselves? And shall the Lord sound the trumpet of his judgments in VIRGINIA, and the people not be afraid? Will they still sleep on in security, and never exert themselves to escape his vengeance, or defend themselves against their enemies? What but destruction, either in this world or the next, or both, can be the consequence of such stupid security, and hardened impenitence?

Therefore sinners, if you will not hear the call to repentance, you may *prepare for destruction*. I do not mean, that an angry God will certainly cut you off by some *temporal* judgment, tho' it is very likely to be the doom of some of you; but I mean, that his judgments that are now abroad in the earth, will have some dreadful effect upon you. You may *groan* under the burden of them; you will be *hardened* by them, 'and revolt more and more;' you will be made ripe for *everlasting destruction*; and *that* shall soon seize and crush you, tho' you may escape the sword of your enemies. O sinners, the account against you is swelling fast,

at

at such a time as this; and if you are not converted now, it will highly aggravate your sin and ruin. The *snare* shall not be taken up from the earth, 'till it has taken something;' and the judgments of God shall not be removed, till they have answered his design, the design either of *vengeance* or of *grace*.

I shall shut up this discourse with an advice or two, suited to the present situation of our country.

1. *Put yourselves in a posture of defence.* We do not certainly know the designs of our enemies, whether they intend immediately to improve the advantages they have gained, and over-run the country; or whether they will content themselves for the present to secure the acquisitions they have made, and to ravage and plunder our families. But we ought to provide against contingencies, and prepare for the worst. Therefore furnish yourselves with arms and ammunition, as well as their present scarcity will allow. You may yet need them for your own defence; or if the enemy should not make inroads so far into the center of the colony, your assistance may be necessary for the protection of our poor exposed brethren in the remote western counties, that are liable to their barbarities: For it is unreasonable that the whole burden of defending our frontiers should lie upon them. If you have a drop of *British Blood* in your veins, if you have any thing of the spirit of *Men*, or of *Christians*, exert yourselves on this occasion. It now becomes you to be all *Patriots*, all *Soldiers*. Your liberty, your property, your religion, your lives, your all, are at stake: Your families, your posterity call upon you to exert yourselves, and not deliver them up to slavery, to cruelty, to superstition. Had you ever had the unhappy ex-

F

perience

perience of a *French* government,—a *French* government over *Protestants*,—a *French* government over conquered *Protestants*,—over conquered *Britons*, their natural enemies ; you would be deeply sensible that all these blessings are in danger ; and you would rather generously risque your lives, or fly to the remotest parts of the earth, than suffer such an iron yoke to be revitted about your necks. Therefore ‘quit yourselves like men, be strong.’ The imprecation of the prophet, will fall upon the mean, sneaking coward. ‘Curled be the man that keepeth back his sword from blood.’ Shall we tamely resign such a flourishing, wide-extended country into the merciless hands of barbarity, arbitrary power, and Popish superstition ? Have we enjoyed the blessings and privileges of our country, while in peace ; and shall we abandon it, and leave it to shift for itself, when in danger ? Certainly such sordid, effeminate souls are unworthy of a place in any country. Can you bear the thought, that slavery should clank her chain in this land of liberty ? That the house of God should be made the temple of idols ? That you should entail slavery, and idolatry upon your miserable posterity ? Can you bear the thought, that *Indian* savages, and *French* *Papists*, infamous all the world over for treachery and tyranny, should rule *Protestants* and *Britons*, with a rod of iron ; and riot in those possessions, for which you have sweat and laboured ? If you have any manly resentment within you, let it kindle at the thought : *Passion was made for such an object* ; and you may lawfully indulge it. The case of our country is not yet desperate : ‘In the name of the Lord, we will yet lift up our banners ;’ and hope for success and victory. But if a spirit of presumption, or cowardice, continue to lull asleep,

sleep, or unman, the inhabitants, I must give thee up, O my country ! Such a set of dastardly creatures are unworthy of so happy a spot on the globe ; and no wonder if their dwellings should cast them out.

If any of you are frightened and intimidated from venturing your lives for your country, because you are full of fears about your everlasting state, and you would desire to live longer, to make it sure : To such of you I would say, Now you find the bad effects of your former negligence. Had you ' given all diligence to make your calling and ' election sure,' in times of peace and safety, you would not probably be left in such perplexity, in the hour of difficulty. You have no other way now, but diligently improve the time you have : And if, after thorough self-examination you can entertain even trembling hopes of your preparation for eternity, you may courageously venture, and leave the event to God. Your cowardly desertion of the cause of your country, and seeking to prolong your life by that unlawful means, will not be a likely way to remove doubts and fears. You would be always haunted with a consciousness of guilt ; and that would damp your spirits, cast a gloom over your minds, and obscure the evidences of your hopes. FOLLOW THE PATH OF DUTY, wherever it leads ; for that will always prove the safest in the issue.

As for such of you as are really unprepared for your latter end, and justly conscious of it ; I have sundry things to say to you ; and Oh ! that they may sink deep into your hearts. (1.) How may it shock you to think, that you who have lived so long in the world, should want more time to turn to God, and prepare for eternity ? Alas ! what have you done with the ten, twenty, thirty,

or forty years that God has given you for this purpose? Ah! are they all gone, without doing any of the great work you were sent into the world for? Have they all been wasted upon sin, the flesh and the world, and sacrificed to the devil? Have you been destroying yourselves all this time? Oh! Sirs, have I not told you of this, but in vain? Have I not often warned you of the dangers of delays in turning to God? Will you now at length believe me? Oh! will you now conclude it high time for you to return to God?

(2.) If the reason why you desire to preserve your lives longer, be, that you may have time to turn to God, and prepare for eternity, then you are carefully improving the time you now have. It is a vain pretence that you *want more time* for this, if you do not *use the time you have*. And are you doing so? Are you seeking the Lord in earnest, and endeavouring to repent and turn to him? If not, you only want time to sin longer, to pursue the world and your pleasures longer. And can you expect, God will indulge you in such a wicked desire? (3.) It is not the want of time but the want of a heart, that keeps you unconverted.

St. Paul was converted in three days, the *Jaylor* in a few hours, and St. Peter's hearers under one short sermon; and why may not you hope for the like blessing, if you exert yourselves in earnest?

(4.) To excite you to this, let me try an argument or two from a new topic.—It is you and such sinners as you, that have brought all these calamities upon the country: Impenitent sinners are the bane of society; and bring down the wrath of God upon it. Therefore if you would save your country, repent and be converted. What a cutting thought may it now be to you, “I am one of the guilty creatures for whom my country is now
“ suf-

“suffering?”—Consider also, if the things you fear should come upon you, how miserable would you be! An angry God above you! a withering, ravaged country, an Aceldama, a field of blood, around you! a guilty conscience within you! and a burning hell just before you! Then you will borrow the despairing complaint of *Saul*, ‘The *Philistines* are upon me, and God is departed from me.’ Then you will see the use of religion, and bitterly lament your neglect of it. Therefore now make it your concern.

2. *Let this be a season of prayer and supplication among us.* If God be the supreme King of our country, let us implore, and depend upon, his protection. ‘Should not a people seek unto their God *?’ Prayer is the *language of nature in distress*; and men that had no other principle to direct them, have fled to this refuge; upon the appearance of danger. ‘Some put their trust in chariots, and some in horses;’ and our country has no doubt offended in putting their confidence in a brave general, in veteran soldiers, and a fine train of artillery; and what is become of them all! Let us learn for the future to put our trust in the Lord of Hosts; and ‘if he be on our side, we need not fear what man can do.’ His assistance is to be obtained only in the way of *prayer*: Therefore lift up your cries to him; keep your souls always in a praying posture. And for your encouragement, let me assure you, that ‘the fervent prayer of a righteous man,’ is not useless breath pour’d out in the air, but ‘availeth much.’ In this way the feeble and timorous, and even the tender sex, may contribute to the defence of their country, in some retired and peaceful corner. They may engage the God of heaven to become
our

our ally; and thro' him we will be able to push down our enemies; thro' his name will we tread them under, that rise up against us.*

Finally; do not indulge excessive despondency in the present discouraging posture of affairs. What is your religion good for, if it do not support you in such a time as this? Do not disgrace it, by unmanly dastardly fears. Shew the world that you have a God to go to in your difficulties, and that you can chearfully live or die under his shelter. I am solicitous for the behaviour of my countrymen in general, at this juncture; But I must tell you, I am particularly solicitous, that you my brethren of the *dissenters*, should behave with honour and spirit; and shew yourselves worthy of those privileges you enjoy, and of those you claim. Many of us have taken the *Oaths* to his Majesty's person and government; and we cannot desert the cause of our country, at this time, without gross perjury—But I shall desist. Your own hearts, I hope, supply my defects, and suggest to you a thousand considerations adapted to the present case; and may God make them prevalent with you. *Amen.*

* Psalm xliv. 5.

An



A N

H Y M N.

I.

W H I L E various rumours spread abroad,
 And hold our souls in dread suspense,
 We fly to thee, our country's God;
 Our refuge is thy providence.

II.

This wilderness so long untill'd,
 An hideous waste of barren ground,
 Thy care has made a fruitful field,
 With peace and plenty richly crown'd.

III.

Thy gospel spreads an heavenly day,
 Throughout this once benighted land,
 A land once wild with beasts of prey,
 By impious Heathen rites profan'd.

IV.

Thy gospel, like a heavenly vine,
 Its branches did begin to spread:
 Refresh'd our souls with sacred wine,
 And screen'd the fainting with its shade.

V.

V.

*And shall these blessings now remove ?
 Shall peace and plenty fly away ?
 The land thy care did thus improve,
 Wilt thou give up, a helpless prey ?*

VI.

*O! must we bid our God adieu ?
 And must thy gospel take its flight ?
 Oh! shall our children never view,
 The beamings of that heavenly light ?*

VII.

*Forbid it Lord! with arms of faith,
 We'll hold thee fast, and thou shalt stay :
 We'll cry while we have life or breath,
 " Our God, do not depart away."*

VIII.

*If broken hearts and weeping eyes,
 Can find acceptance at thy throne ;
 Lo, here they are ; this sacrifice,
 Thou wilt accept thro' Christ thy Son.*

